

DOE Grid Deployment Office October 30 GRIP Second Round Selections Webinar

WHITNEY BELL: Hello, and welcome to the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program, also known as the GRIP Program, second round selections webinar. I'm Whitney Bell with ICF, and I'll be your host today. First, we have an important notice for today's presentation.

The information being presented is based on project applications at the time of publication and should not be considered final. By publishing this project information, DOE is not endorsing, recommending, or favoring any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, or manufacturing.

And now, I do have a few housekeeping items to share with you. This Webex meeting is being recorded and may be used by the US Department of Energy. If you do not wish to have your voice recorded, please do not speak during the call. If you do not wish to have your image recorded, please turn off your camera and participate by phone. If you speak during the call or use a video connection, you are presumed to consent to recording and use of your voice or image. Luckily for you, all participants are in listen only mode.

I will say, if you have any technical issues, you may type them into the chat and send to ICF tech host. Someone will be able to answer and get with you right away. Additionally, please note that any third party AI meeting assistants are not allowed in this meeting, so any unverified or suspicious meeting participants will be removed and/or not admitted at all.

And then lastly, if you need to view the live captioning, please refer to the link that will appear in the chat now. We will not be taking questions during today's webinar. And then finally, and what is usually our most popular question, we will post a recording and copy of today's presentation on the GRIP Program second round selections webinar web page by this coming Friday. That is November 1. You can find a link to that page here in the chat.

All right. During today's webinar, we'll hear an overview of the GRIP program, followed by an in depth look at projects selected for the second round funding. We'll then wrap up with a discussion on what's next for the program. With all of those items out of the way, let's go ahead and get started. I'm excited to have our first speaker come up, Maria Robinson. She's the Director of the Grid Deployment Office and have her provide some opening remarks. Maria, welcome.

MARIA ROBINSON: Thank you so much, Whitney. Great to be with all of you today. My name is Maria Robinson. I have the great honor of leading the Grid Deployment Office. And thank you for joining our webinar today. I think it's no secret to anyone here that many regions across the United States are experiencing extreme stress to their electric system due to the impact of climate change, including extreme heat, wildfires, hurricanes.

And higher than average temperatures really raise the likelihood of heat waves, heat domes and droughts, which of course, increase the demand for air conditioning, cooling, and strain electric generators and power infrastructure. In addition, we know that wildfires can destroy transmission lines, and utilities may proactively shut down some of those lines during [AUDIO OUT] that more than 90% of power outages result from weather-related events that damage poles and lines.

So here at the Grid Deployment Office, we have the GRIP Program, which is part of our overall suite of programs and tools at the Department of Energy to help ensure America's power grid can provide reliable, affordable power, while, of course, expanding transmission from coast to coast and everywhere in between. So we're excited about the selections that we announced in August and earlier this month, and it's a pleasure to be able to discuss those selections today here with you.

I just want to say that I know that there are folks attending today who submitted GRIP applications that were not selected. This is an incredibly competitive program, and we know that there's a significant need for these types of investments throughout the country.

We received many strong applications with total funding requests totaling nearly eight times the amount of funding that we have available just in this round. And that doesn't even include our concept papers. There are so many really great proposals, and we simply could not fund everyone. We do look forward to launching a third round of the GRIP funding, and that will be covering just FY26 funds in the spring. In the meantime, I encourage you to all think about the projects you might bring forward in a third round. Talking to your communities and your stakeholders is a really great step here in trying to find some of the most meaningful projects that federal funding can really take to the next level.

So with that, I'll turn it over to Ariel Horowitz, the Grid Deployment Office's Deputy Director for Grid Modernization, to discuss GRIP in a little more detail, as well as these latest selections that we feel confident will truly benefit communities across the country. Ariel, over to you.

ARIEL HOROWITZ: Thanks so much, Maria, and thank you to our hosts at ICF. I'm Ariel Horowitz. I'm the Deputy Director for Grid modernization here at the Grid Deployment Office, and the GRIP Program is executed out of my division, along with a bunch of collaborators across the department. This is a monumental effort, and we're very delighted to be able to talk more about our selections in GRIP round two today.

So a little bit of orientation around the program. The Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program, or GRIP, is a \$10.5 billion program directed at enhancing grid flexibility and improving the resilience of the power system against growing threats of extreme weather, as Maria was discussing. Through these investments, which are our largest scale financial assistance program out to the grid and grid operators, we are maximizing grid infrastructure.

We are looking to deploy at scale some of the best in class, most advanced technologies for the grid and leverage private sector and non-federal public capital to advance grid policy goals and transmission deployment goals around expansion of the capacity and flexibility of the electric system.

GRIP includes three sort of subprograms or topic areas-- the Grid Resilience Utility and Industry Grants, the Smart Grid Grants, and the Grid Innovation Program, which I will talk about at more detail. Each one of those topic areas is funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, different sections in that law.

So the Grid Resilience Utility and Industry Grants come out of BIL section 40101c. That's \$2.5 billion dollars for resilience projects that reduce the likelihood and consequence of impacts to the electric grid associated with extreme weather or wildfire and other natural disasters. The eligible entities for that program are primarily grid operators as well as storage operators, electricity generators, transmission owners and operators, distribution providers, and fuel suppliers.

The Smart Grid Grants, topic area two, is under BIL 40107. That's \$3 billion for innovative and ambitious uses of cutting-edge, market-ready technologies to support the data richness of the grid, the flexibility, the

adaptivity of the grid. The eligible entity pool there is quite broad, including institutions of higher learning, all for profit entities and nonprofit entities as well as state and local government entities and tribal nations. And then the Grid Innovation Program under BIL section 40103b, or topic area three of the GRIP Program, is \$5 billion for high impact innovative projects that improve grid reliability and resilience on the local, regional, and interregional scales. The eligible entities for this topic area are only states, a combination of states, tribal nations, units of local government, and public utility commissions. That said, this is infrastructure deployment, so we really look for those partnerships between public entities and private entities that are largely executing infrastructure deployment work as part of this topic area.

A quick reminder on the GRIP round one selections that we announced about a year ago. We, at that time, announced \$3.5 billion worth of selections for 58 projects in 44 states across the country to, again, enhance the nation's ability to deliver affordable, safe, and reliable, clean power to American communities, prepare for extreme weather, and meet clean energy goals.

At the time, this was the largest single direct investment in critical grid infrastructure in the United States history. Across the federal and non-federal shares, these projects totaled about \$8 billion in public and private investments and seek to enable the addition of 35 gigawatts of renewable energy, expanding the United States renewable energy capacity by over 10%.

Over the past year, we've issued 54 of those awards, and many of those projects are now kicked off and operational. We are excited to be moving into project management on these projects, and keep tune over the fall as we start looking to talk about what we're learning from the GRIP projects as they roll out.

So getting into our round two selections. The GRIP round two selections really double down on a lot of the success that we saw in GRIP round one. These selections include 46 projects across 47 states and Washington, DC. They will impact at least 63 million homes and businesses across the country. This is a total of \$4.2 billion in federal investment and over \$14 billion in total public and private investment across the whole selection cohort.

We expect these projects to expand grid capacity and enable new resources to the tune of 20 gigawatts and upgrade or construct nearly 2,000 miles of transmission. In addition, around 11,000 jobs will be created or supported through these projects and around \$475 million dedicated to community benefits associated with the projects delivery.

By topic area, our selections in GRIP round two. In topic area one, the Grid Resilience Utility and Industry Grants, we selected 14 projects for a total of \$887 million in federal investment and \$1.75 billion in federal and non-federal investment.

In topic area two, the Smart Grid Grants, we selected 24 projects for just over \$1 billion in federal investment and just shy of \$2.5 billion total with federal and non-federal shares. And in the Grid Innovation Program, topic area three, we selected eight projects for \$2.2 billion in federal investment and nearly \$10 billion in total investment.

A little bit more detail on the selected projects in each topic area. So in topic area one, under 40101c, the Grid Resilience Grants-- you can see the map here. We'll have a map like this for each of the three topic areas. So the darker color blue here is the state that holds the lead applicant, and then the light blue states are partners or significantly impacted states.

So we have multiple different projects that are impacting a range of states through partnerships and coalition work. One good example of that is the Georgia Transmission Corporation is working with co-ops

in 11 states across the southeast and other regions to bring out advanced conductors for resilience purposes.

Similarly, TVA is leading a large scale project that is impacting both their territory, as well as 10 of their local distribution customers across eight states across both transmission and distribution upgrades for resilience and capacity improvement. We have multiple projects in Texas, including distribution hardening and transmission expansion for resilience. We also have transmission expansion resilience projects in other areas of the country.

For example, the Hoosier Energy Rural Electric Co-op leading a team to create new transmission loops across Illinois and Indiana. This is a new element of the program for this year, that we expanded the eligible activities to include construction of new transmission for the purposes of reducing contingency or closing a loop, and we were really pleased to see folks take us up on that and move through projects that include that type of scope.

We also saw additional investment in wildfire mitigation in this round. As some of you may recall, we had a significant number of wildfire mitigation projects in the first round of GRIP, and we see additional wildfire mitigation work in this round as well as a fair amount of work in terms of hardening against what we're calling the hurricane hazards of high wind and flooding.

In addition, we're seeing a lot of investment in smart resilience technology, including FLISR and LiDAR guided vegetation management, so we're really pleased to see that range of different technologies brought to bear for resilience as well.

In the Smart Grid Grants, topic area two, similar map structure here. The dark green states are where the lead applicant, or the crux of the project in some cases are based, and then the light green states are significantly impacted or partner states. We see work around flexible interconnection here as well as, again, doubling down on what we did in group one. We funded a significant amount of advanced distribution management systems and distributed energy resource management systems.

And here, we see additional investment in data management systems as well. We're also seeing some new themes this year, including, again, transmission technology. So we have a couple of different advanced transmission technologies across VEIR, for example, advanced conductors in Georgia, as well as inertia management and solid state substation work. We also have three different projects that are working on vehicle to grid interaction with grid operators.

We have some advanced virtual power plant work. We did a fair number of microgrid projects that were selected in group one, and we have a microgrid project here in Hawaii that's a front of meter renewable microgrid supporting a US Navy base through Ameresco. And in addition, we're just really pleased to see, again, that sort of continued work around interconnection.

This has been a big theme of the department's, is working to support improvement in the duration of the interconnection queue. And we have a selection in this cohort from a company called Grid Unity that will be working with six different RTOs to modernize their data management for interconnection and reduce the duration of interconnection queue on a project by project basis by over a year.

On topic area three, section 40103b, the Grid Innovation Program. We selected eight projects. These are mainly focused on transmission capacity, including significant deployment of advanced conductors and reconductoring projects. So we have advanced conductor and reconductoring projects in Utah, in California with the California Energy Commission, and in North Carolina.

And then we also have deployment of HVDC infrastructure in New York and across several states in the north led by Montana. That includes the North Plains Connector line that will stretch between WECC and MISO.

In addition to those transmission capacity projects, we also are in negotiation for projects that are focused on offshore wind interconnection in the northeast, led by the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, tribal microgrids in the northern California coast led by the Redwood Coast Energy Authority, and a selection to the Virginia Department of Energy focused on data center flexibility as a grid assets. That will be two different data center projects with significant behind the meter resources that can be brought to bear for grid interactive purposes, one in Virginia and one in South Carolina.

Just to echo again some of the themes of our selected projects. Resilience and reliability is one of our main themes of this program. Our resilience investments focus, again, on wildfire, as well as those hurricane hazards of flooding and high winds. Obviously, we saw a pretty significant hurricane season this year, and we do expect to continue thinking about how we can establish best practices both for wildfire mitigation and for mitigating those hurricane hazards across both the flooding and the wind impacts.

Again, as examples, we're seeing a lot of fault location, isolation, and service restoration, or FLISR, projects, deployment of reclosers, including smart reclosers, undergrounding as well as monitoring and control of where outages are, dynamic sectionalization, and being able to respond to outage conditions in a more dynamic way.

On the transmission, innovation, and resilience side, across this whole cohort, we have 12 projects with new or reconstructed transmission, and at least 15 different projects deploying advanced conductors. So that was something we were specifically looking for in this second round solicitation was bringing advanced conductors out at scale.

That follows up on some of the work that we did in the Pathways to Innovative Grid Deployment Commercial Liftoff report that some of you may have seen earlier this year. Overall, 950 miles total of transmission innovation, including these transmission loops for reliability purposes that are new in this round of the program.

On the distribution side of the grid, the DER innovation and grid integration, we have nine different projects that are deploying microgrids, storage as a non wires alternative, and/or virtual power plants. So this was something, again, we're really pleased to see grid operators kind of upskilling there around the use of these DERs for grid benefits that go beyond the peak aspect. Three projects focus on vehicle to grid orchestration, as I mentioned, interconnection hardware, and software improvements, and again, 20 gigawatts of total capacity enabled.

And then on the broad consortia approaches, we really were very pleased to see responsiveness from the industry around building these partnerships across territories, across different states with different types of grid operators. So we have seven projects that are impacting at least six different states. Again, really broad geographical impact there. Eight different projects that are vendor led, which is a significant increase from the first round of the program, and a range of different public-private partnerships.

I just want to emphasize here that overall-- as Maria mentioned, as I'll mention again in a moment-- this is an extremely competitive program. The level of ambition that we saw across all of the proposals and the level of ambition and sort of creativity that we see in the projects that were selected is extremely high. We

are really impressed and pleased by the level of responsiveness from the electric industry that we saw. And certainly, we think that this echoes the thirst for evolving the grid that is out there in the industry. On the community benefits front, across the 46 selected projects, we have about \$475 million slated to be invested in workforce development programs, scholarship and apprenticeship programs, and grants out to community organizations.

This is a really excellent aspect of, again, the proposals that we saw across the cohort is how thoughtful they have been around the use of the community benefits plan to support project success as well as support, again, the overall strength of their community relationships and their development of a broad pipeline of additional talent to come into the industry and support that additional change and modernization that we expect to see on the grid over the coming years.

More than 80% of these projects will work with local chapters of IBEW, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and we expect to see the GRIP projects significantly investing in over 1,000 different disadvantaged communities across the country. In addition, these projects will improve energy affordability and reliability for consumers across the country.

Generally speaking, all the projects have either an affordability impact, reliability impact, or both. Again, this is work that it's really great to be able to bring out to ratepayers across the country in terms of how it is that the grid can continue to serve safe, reliable, and affordable power.

And a quick note on the selections. We had approximately \$3.9 billion in total funding that we anticipated to be available for this round of the program, and we received 325 applications requesting over \$30 billion in total funds, over seven times the amount of funding available, an oversubscription rate of around 790%.

For both rounds of GRIP, we received over \$50 billion in funding requests for projects across all 50 states. We really are observing, again, the need and the thirst here for federal partnership around grid modernization and grid resilience. We read so many wonderful applications. Again, we're really, really pleased by the cohort that we have, and we know that there's a lot of ambition out there in the field to take on projects of this type.

So our combined highlights across both rounds of GRIP. In total, we selected 104 projects so far, impacting all 50 states and Washington, DC, and we expect to touch over 90 million homes and businesses across the country. This totals to \$7.6 billion in federal investment and \$22.6 billion in public and private investment.

We expect to see around 55 gigawatts of expanded grid capacity and new renewable resources, over 2,600 miles of new or upgraded transmission lines-- I don't think we can count yet the number of miles of distribution lines, but we hopefully will be getting reporting on that-- and nearly 15,000 jobs created or supported with over \$500 million dedicated to community benefits. Just a significant suite of impacts from these projects that, again, we can only execute in partnership with the folks out in the field that are proposing these projects and then taking them on.

What's next? GRIP round three. The Notice of Funding Opportunity is anticipated in spring of 2025. As Maria mentioned, this round of the program will only cover fiscal year '26 funding, so we do anticipate that it will be a smaller round of funding than the first two rounds.

Again, we also anticipate that it will be very competitive, but we are really excited to see the projects that folks bring in. We are still kind of working through our program design on what this Notice of Funding

Opportunity will look like in terms of any changes to the areas of interest, for example, from group one and two.

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And then project fact sheets and details are also available online. The URL is there, and I believe is being put in the chat. And there, you can search and sort by the impacted state, the award status as we work through negotiations, topic area, and then we anticipate additional sort of data being put up in that table over time as well.

Thank you so much for your time and attendance today. We're really looking forward to working through negotiations for this selection cohort as well and then getting these projects out into the field to be able to impact folks out across the country.

WHITNEY BELL: Thank you so much, Ariel. Thank you, Maria. And thank you to everyone for joining us today. This does wrap up today's webinar, and as a reminder, we will post the recording and a copy of the presentation on the GRIP program second round selections webinar web page this coming Friday, and we'll be sure to send you an email when the materials have been posted. That link will be dropped in the chat now. Thank you again, everyone. Take care. We'll see you next time.